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IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

March 11, 2004

For immediate release

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EPC TO PICK FROM THREE WATER QUALITY OPTIONS AT MARCH 15 MEETING

DES MOINES –Commissioners will consider three options for adopting rules limiting dissolved solids and chloride in state waters at the March 15 meeting of the Environmental Protection Commission.

After considerable discussion on acute and chronic chloride criteria and protection of livestock watering uses at the last two commission meetings, the DNR will recommend tabling proposed chloride limits and adopting only the proposed site-specific evaluation and guidelines for total dissolved solids and associated key ions.

Tabling the chloride rule changes would allow the DNR more time to analyze the economic impacts of chloride standards, particularly on the cities with naturally occurring elevated hardness in their drinking water source and where home softening units may contribute elevated chloride levels to the wastewater treatment facility.

The EPC will meet on Monday, at 10 a.m., at the DNR office, 7900 Hickman Road in Urbandale. Public participation is scheduled for 10:30 a.m. The meeting is open to the public. An appointment with Roquette America Inc. is scheduled for 1:30 p.m.

The complete agenda follows:

- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Minutes
- Director's Remarks
- Final Rule: Chapter 61, Water Quality Standards, Chapter 62, Effluent and Pretreatment Standards: Other Effluent Limitations or Prohibitions

- Notice of Intended Action: Chapter 61, Water Quality Standards, Coldwater Stream Protocol
- Manure Applicator Certification: Termination of regular rulemaking proceedings
- Contract: Purchase of Recycling Education Trailer from Freeman Exhibits
- Solid Waste Alternatives Program: Recommendations
- Proposed Rule: Amend Iowa Administrative Code 567 - Chapter 105, Organic Materials Composting Facilities
- Notice of Intended Action: Amend Iowa Administrative Code 567-Chapter 118, Discarded Appliance Demanufacturing
- Notice of Intended Action: Chapter 137 - Land Recycling Program
- SPARS Presentation
- Air Quality - Title V Fee Budget Review
- Referrals to the Attorney General
 - Roquette America, Inc. (Keokuk) - wastewater
- Monthly Reports
- Contract approval for small public water system certified operator training for Small Drinking Water System Operators – Grade A certification
- General Discussion
- Items for Next Month's Meeting

More information about the agenda items can be found on the DNR website under Commissions and Boards at www.iowadnr.com.

The members of the commission are Kathryn Murphy, Chair, LeMars; Terrance Townsend, Newton; Lisa Davis-Cook, West Des Moines; Darrell Hanson, Manchester; Lori Glanzman, Mt. Pleasant; Jerry Peckum, Jefferson; Heidi Vittetoe, Washington; Francis Thicke, Fairfield; and Donna Buell, Spirit Lake. The director of the DNR is Jeff Vonk.

For more information, contact Karen Grimes at (515) 281-5135.

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WINTERSET WATER QUALITY MEETING SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 25

DES MOINES — A meeting to discuss plans for improving water quality at Cedar Lake near Winterset will be held at 7 p.m. March 25 in the Winterset High School auditorium.

“Everyone who is interested in the water quality of Cedar Lake is encouraged to attend the public meeting,” said Chris Van Gorp, a member of the TMDL and Water Quality Assessment section of the DNR. “We are interested in hearing the various points of view regarding the water quality of Cedar Lake.”

Cedar Lake has violated the water quality standards that protect it as a drinking water source. Levels of nitrate in the lake have exceeded the standard of 10 mg/L.

TMDLs — or Total Maximum Daily Loads — is the name of the process used to address waters considered to be impaired. Simply put, TMDLs are calculations used to determine how much of a pollutant a water body can receive and still maintain its designated use, such as supporting aquatic life, allowing body contact such as swimming or being used as a drinking water supply.

Much of the focus at the upcoming meeting will be on what data has been collected on Cedar Lake to document the problem and what steps are being taken to develop a plan to address the impairment.

“The good news is that we have the knowledge and expertise to address many of the problems associated with non-point source pollution and that there are governmental programs available to provide some financial assistance to private landowners interested in doing things to improve water quality,” Van Gorp said.

Additional information on the TMDL program is available on the DNR’s Web site at: <http://www.iowadnr.com/water/tmdlwqa/index.html>.

For more information, contact Chris Van Gorp at (515) 281-4791 or at chris.vangorp@dnr.state.ia.us.

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ASBESTOS ILLNESSES COULD CLIMB, CONTROL EFFORTS VITAL

DES MOINES – Asbestos related diseases kill an estimated 10,000 Americans every year, an epidemic that is expected to worsen, says a report based on federal health records and released by the Environmental Working Group.

According to the report, asbestos related illnesses kill more Americans each year than skin cancer, and nearly equals the number slain in firearm assaults. Because the latency period for asbestos diseases to appear can take several decades, illnesses are expected to increase as asbestos control programs did not occur until the 1980s, the report concludes.

The report ranks Iowa 30th for the number of cases of asbestos related illnesses. Nationally, many of the illnesses are for people who work with asbestos materials or live near facilities that processed the mineral.

“A cause for concern, but not panic, people should take common sense precautions to avoid inhaling asbestos fibers. The report highlights the continued need to manage the vast quantities of asbestos still present in building materials,” said Marion Burnside, DNR asbestos inspector, who added nearly 30 million tons of the material has been used in the U.S. for building materials.

Activities that create asbestos laden dusts such as building renovations, demolitions and building fires used as firefighter training are typically subject to asbestos release prevention regulations. Often these require a thorough professional inspection and lab analysis of suspect asbestos containing material, notification to the DNR and in some cases, proper removal and disposal. Private homeowners are not regulated, but should take precautions to prevent asbestos exposure.

Burnside inspects renovation and demolition projects statewide and last year received over 2,200 notices of projects subject to the asbestos release regulations. He also received tips from citizens concerned about demolitions and other large renovation projects.

Asbestos poses little health risks if the material is in good condition and left undisturbed. Fiber release and exposure occur during cutting, sanding and other renovation and demolition activity. Asbestos laden dust can travel great distances and expose the general public.

It can take decades after exposure for asbestos related symptoms to occur. The amount and duration of exposure increase disease risks. Workers with occupational asbestos exposure, especially workers who smoke, have higher asbestos related disease rates. Burnside said several Iowans have died from asbestos illnesses despite careers with no known exposure.

While private homeowners are generally not regulated, simple steps can avoid exposure.

“Before you begin a home repair, have a lab test the item for asbestos,” said Burnside, who noted that common dust masks do not provide protection. “There is no reason to remove asbestos materials if they are in good condition and left undisturbed,” he said. “But when disturbing asbestos materials, it is best to have it professionally removed,” he said.

Asbestos has been used in over 3,000 commercial products. In 1989, EPA banned most asbestos-containing products, but in 1991, this regulation was overturned by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans.

“It is a common misunderstanding that asbestos containing materials are no longer sold. That is not true,” said Burnside. “There are cases where asbestos materials were properly removed, but replaced with new building products that contained asbestos,” he said.

Any business or individual compensated to remove asbestos materials is required by the Iowa Division of Labor to obtain a certified asbestos contractor permit. The division maintains a list of contractors.

For more information about asbestos visit www.iowacleanair.com or www.epa.gov. The report is available at www.ewg.org.

For more information, contact Brian Button at (515) 281-7832.

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CONCRETE STANDARDS FOR ANIMAL CONFINEMENTS KICK IN MARCH 24

DES MOINES – New concrete construction standards will take effect for animal confinements on March 24, requiring new construction and expanding operations to meet more site-specific criteria.

There are three major changes to the construction standards:

- use of wire mesh will no longer be allowed as the primary floor reinforcement for confinement tanks or pits with a height of four feet or more,
- producers who use a licensed professional engineer to develop and seal the plans will have more flexibility than those who do not use an engineered design, and
- the wall thickness and reinforcement will be based on the height of the walls, the shape of the structure, the backfill material that is used, and vehicle use within five feet of the walls.

“Those confinements that have already been approved for construction, through their manure management plan or construction permit, will have to use the new standards starting March 24 unless construction has already begun,” said Sara Smith, an engineer with the DNR.

Smith said construction begins when excavating the building or footings, or installing concrete forms; not grading, tree removal or clearing the construction site.

“The new rules should increase protection for surface and groundwater, especially in environmentally sensitive areas,” said Chad Kehrli, an environmental specialist at the Manchester DNR field office.

Kehrli, who was instrumental in proposing the new rules, said that producers and the environment will benefit from better construction.

Small animal feeding operations are specifically exempted from the new rules.

New or expanding animal confinements that are required to have a manure management plan or a construction permit application will be affected. Confinements that plan wall heights higher than 12 feet must use an engineer.

The new standards are more stringent for confinements planned in areas that drain to a known sinkhole or in karst terrain. Karst terrain is found mostly in northeast Iowa where limestone or dolomite has dissolved, often creating caves or sinkholes.

See animal feeding operations on the DNR website at www.iowadnr.com for more information about the new construction standards. Or, have your questions answered by calling a DNR engineer at 515-281-8941 or contacting the local DNR field office.

For more information, contact Sara Smith at 515-242-552